THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) and (b) The Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 has been enacted with a view to regulate the employment of contract labour in certain establishments and to provide for its abolition in certain specific circumstances. There is no restriction on establishment to engage contract labour in those processes, operations or works wherein engagement of contract labour has not been prohibited under the provisions of the Act.

(c) Adequate provisions exist in the various labour laws including the Contract Labour (Regulation and Abolition) Act, 1970 to protect the interest of contract labour in terms of their welfare, health and social security and prevent their exploitation.

Bonded children in sweet-meat shop in Nellore, A.P.

313. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether any complaint on 'Bonded Children' in Nellore sweet-meat shops in Andhra Pradesh has been lodged with NHRC, recently;

(b) if so, the details thereof and status of the complaint;

(c) whether it is a fact that many States do not comply with all provisions of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition)Act, 1976; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor and how many States have not constituted the Vigilance Committee at District and sub-Divisional Level under the said Act?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) and (b) The National Human Right Commission took *suo-moto* cognizance of a news item under the caption '4 Bonded Children freed from Nellore Units' published in "The Hindu" dated 23-02-2003 which, *inter-alia* stated that 4 children including one girl, were rescued from sweet-meat units in Nellore, Andhra Pradesh. The Commission received a report from the State Government stating that the children had been freed from sweet-meat units in Nellore and were sent to their native places after paying Rs. 1000/- to each child. The employers were arrested and cases registered against them.

The matter for rehabilitation of these children is being monitored and followed up with the State Government by the NHRC.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. The Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 has been extended throughout the country and the provisions of the Act are reportedly implemented by all the State Governments and Union Territories. Vigilance Committees as per Section 13 of the Bonded Labour System (Abolition) Act, 1976 have reportedly been constituted at District and Sub-Divisional levels in all the States except the State of Manipur. As there is no incidence of bonded labour in the State of Manipur, the State Government does not consider necessary to constitute the Vigilance Committees.

New Special Economic Zones

314. SHRI K. RAHMAN KHAN: Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether he has made announcement recently, to the fact that the proposed new special economic zones would be exempted from making contributions to Provident Fund and State Insurance Schemes to help exporters to compete in the international market.

(b) if so, the details thereof and labour unions' reaction thereto; and

(c) what steps are being contemplated to reconcile different views in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF LABOUR (SHRI SAHIB SINGH VERMA): (a) to (c) Yes, Sir. It has been decided that in respect of Special Economic Zones, the State Government may apply for exemption; to the Central Government under Section 16(2) of the Employees' Provident Fund and Miscellaneous Provisions Act, 1952, from the applicability of the provisions of the Act to SEZ for 5 years. The decision shall be taken on a case-to-case basis.

In respect of the ESI Act 1948, the State Government, being the appropriate Government may take a decision as per the powers provided under the Act.

Labour reforms

315. DR. MANMOHAN SINGH:
SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA:

Will the Minister of LABOUR be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is proposed to bring out a comprehensive labour reforms;